

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 ICAE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
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FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4492
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SCUL, SOPN
SUBJECT: THOUSANDS THROG TO CANCELLED ROCK CONCERT

1. IT'S HARD TO STOP A "HAPPENING" EVEN IN LENINGRAD.
HAVING ANNOUNCED PREMATURELY IN LENINGRAD PRAVDA THAT
THERE WOULD BE A GREAT ROCK SESSION ON PALACE SQUARE
OUTSIDE WINTER PALACE ON JULY 4 FEATURING JOAN BAEZ,
SANTANA AND THE BEACH BOYS, THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES
EVIDENTLY HOPED THAT WHOLE THING WOULD JUST GO AWAY IF
THEY SAID NOTHING FURTHER. IT DIDN'T.

2. ALERTED AROUND 10:00 P.M. ON JULY 4 THAT PALACE SQUARE
HAD BEEN CORDONED OFF, CONGENOFF TOURED AREA AND SAW THAT
THERE WERE LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF MOSTLY YOUNG PEOPLE
BEING PUSHED BY POLICE AND SOME TROOPS AWAY FROM PALACE
SQUARE ACROSS THE BRIDGE TO VASILIEVSKIY ISLAND OR DOWN
NEVSKIY PROSPEKT. AT ONE POINT, FOUR SPRINKLER TRUCKS
DROVE TOGETHER PAST REAR ADMIRALTY, FORCING EVERYONE BACK
OFF THE SIDEWALK ONTO THE ADMIRALTY GARDEN LAWN. ALL
ENTRANCES TO THE SQUARE WERE BLOCKED BY POLICE CARS AND
TRUCKS. CROWDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AT THIS POINT WERE MORE
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CURIOUS BYSTANDERS THAN ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS, ALTHOUGH
SOME WHISTLED AT POLICE AND OTHERS ARGUED WHEN BEING
PUSHED IN DIRECTION THEY DID NOT WANT TO GO. ASKED WHAT
HAD HAPPENED, ONE YOUNG MAN REFERRED TO SCHEDULED CONCERT,
NOTED THAT IT HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED BY VOA, AND SAID WITH
SMILE THAT POLICE APPARENTLY DID NOT LIKE A CROWD.
"PERHAPS THEY ARE AFRAID OF A COUP" (PEREVOROT). ANOTHER

YOUNG MAN SAID HE HEARD CONCERT HAD BEEN POSTPONED TO JULY 12.

3. PRESIDENT OF TEXAS TECH, MACKEY, WAS NEAR CROWD AROUND 10:00 P.M. AND SAID IT HAD EXPLOSIVE QUALITY REMINDING HIM OF STUDENT RIOTS IN U.S. (COMMENT: HE HAS NOT BEEN IN USSR BEFORE AND IS UNACQUAINTED WITH EXTENT TO WHICH SOVIET PUBLIC IS GENERALLY PASSIVE IN FACE OF AUTHORITY.) HE SAW ONE YOUNG MAN BEING ROUGHED UP BY POLICE WHO GRABBED HIM BY LONG HAIR AND THREW HIM IN PADDY WAGON.

4. IREX STUDENT WAS INFORMED BY SOVIET FRIEND THAT SHE HAD SEEN CROWD OF PERHAPS 100 PEOPLE BEING FORCED DOWN NEVSKIY PROSPEKT TO FONTANKA WHERE SEVERAL WERE PUSHED IN, FISHED OUT AND THROWN IN PADDY WAGON. SHE ALSO WONDERED IF THERE WAS SOME CONNECTION WITH OUR JULY 4 CELEBRATION SINCE SHE HAD SEEN SIGN WITH "FREEDOM" ON IT.

5. COMMENT: WE CAN EXPECT THAT "HAPPENING" WILL EXPAND WITH EACH TELLING, SO THAT WE WILL BE BUSY SORTING OUT FACT FROM FICTION FOR NEXT DAYS. AT PRESENT HARD FACTS WOULD SEEM TO BE THE FOLLOWING. SOVIET OFFICIALS WITH USUAL PUBLIC RELATIONS OBTUSENESS, CHOSE NOT TO INFORM THEIR PUBLIC THAT CONCERT WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE. SINCE ONE SOURCE REPORTED RECEIVING CALL FROM BAKU ASKING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ABOUT THE CONCERT, WORD OBVIOUSLY SPREAD LIKE WILD-FIRE OF TINY ANNOUNCEMENT IN LENINGRAD PRAVDA. CROWDS BEGAN TO GATHER BY NOON WHEN CONGENOFF SAW MORE THAN USUAL NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND MONUMENT ON PALACE SQUARE AND ONE POLICE WAGON IN SIGHT. WHEN CROWD KEPT GROWING, POLICE EVIDENTLY BECAME ALARMED AND TRIED TO BREAK UP THE CROWDS, CLEAR PALACE SQUARE AND SEND EVERYONE HOME. TO WHAT EXTENT ARMY TROOPS WERE INVOLVED IS NOT CLEAR. THE AMOUNT OF VIOLENCE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN LOW, ISOLATED AND ESSENTIALLY POLICE INITIATED. ACTUALLY, MANY OF THE POLICE APPEARED TO BE SOMEWHAT AMUSED THEMSELVES BY THE SITUATION AND NOT PARTICULARLY BELLIGERENT BY SOVIET STANDARDS. BUT EVEN INERT SOVIET CROWDS DO NOT APPRECIATE BEING SHOUTED AT BY MEN AND CARS WITH BULL HORNS, AND PUSHED AROUND. THEY MUST DRAW THE OBVIOUS LESSON THAT A ROCK CONCERT ON PALACE SQUARE IS SOMEHOW CONSIDERED DANGEROUS BY THE AUTHORITIES, WHO BEHAVE IN THEIR USUAL TROGLYDITE FASHION.

6. OFFICIAL REACTION WILL OBVIOUSLY DEPEND TO SOME EXTENT ON WHETHER DEMONSTRATION WAS SEEN TO HAVE LARGER POLITICAL OVERTONES (E.G., WERE THERE POSTERS?). ONE THING IS CER-

TAIN: THE EVENTS YESTERDAY EVENING HAVE NOT MADE LIFE
EASIER FOR EDITORS OF LENINGRAD PRAVDA. AT OUR
RECEPTION ON JULY 3, LENFILM DIRECTOR BLINOV SAID THAT
FILM SHOOTING HAD BEEN SCHEDULED FOR JULY 2-8 PERIOD.
HE SPECULATED THAT THE EVENT MIGHT STILL TAKE PLACE NEXT
YEAR. WE ARE NOT PLANNING TO BUY ADVANCE TICKETS.
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